

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (canceled)

2. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claims 27 or 46 wherein the object outline is defined by a series of co-ordinates, curves and/or geometric shapes.

Claims 3-10 (canceled)

11. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claims 27 or 46, wherein the depth tag includes a color code.

Claim 12 (canceled)

13. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claims 27 or 46, wherein said depth tag is a numerical value.

14. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said numerical value ranges from 0 to 255.

Claims 15-18 (canceled)

19. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 27 or 46 further including adding a texture bump map to the at least one object.

20. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said texture bump map is defined by breaking the at least one object into a plurality of components and assigning each component a separate depth tag.

21. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said texture bump map is defined by luminance values of individual components of the at least one object.

22. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said texture bump map is defined by chrominance, saturation, color grouping, reflections, shadows, focus and/or sharpness of individual components of the at least one object.

Claims 23-26 (canceled)

27. (currently amended) A method of encoding a depth map comprising:
allocating an object identifier to a plurality of objects without using distance measurement data;
defining an outline of each object;
allocating a depth tag to each said object including
allocating a depth function including a linear ramp or radial ramp, and
allocating a depth for each object, the depth representing the ~~relative~~ depth between said objects; and
producing a depth map by encoding said depth tag and said outlines of each said object, wherein the depth map is configured to be decoded to generate a distortion grid, the distortion grid being used to generate stereoscopic 3D images, and
wherein the steps of allocating the object identifier, allocating the depth tag and defining the outline are performed by a computer or by receiving an input via a pointing device.

28. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 27, wherein said object outline is defined by a series of x,y coordinates, each x,y coordinate being separated by a curve.

29. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 28, wherein each said curve is stored in a library and allocated a unique number.

30. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 28 or claim 29, wherein said object outline also includes data on the orientation of each curve.

31. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 28 or claim 29, wherein each said curve is a bezier curve.

32. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 27, wherein said object outline is defined by at least one geometric shape.

33. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 32, wherein said at least one geometric shape is defined by the form of the shape and the parameters of the shape.

Claims 34-42 (canceled)

43. (previously presented) A method of converting 2D images into stereoscopic images applying a depth map generated according to the method of claim 46.

44. (previously presented) A method of converting 2D images into stereoscopic images applying an encoded depth map generated according to the method of claim 27.

Claim 45 (canceled)

46. (currently amended) A method of encoding a depth map comprising:
allocating object identifiers to a plurality of objects;
defining an outline of each object;
allocating a depth tag to each said object; and
producing a depth map by encoding said depth tag and said outline of each said object,
wherein said allocating the depth tag includes:
allocating a depth function including a linear ramp or radial ramp; and
allocating a depth for each object, said depth representing the ~~relative~~-depth
between said objects,
wherein the depth map is configured to be decoded to generate a distortion grid, the
distortion grid being used to generate stereoscopic 3D images, and
wherein the steps of allocating the object identifier, allocating the depth tag and defining
the outline are performed by a computer or by receiving an input via a pointing device.

Claims 47-51 (canceled)